Condition of Children Birth to Age Five and Status of Early Childhood Services in California

Synthesis of Recent Research

AUGUST 2012

Prepared for
California Department of Education
Child Development Division

Prepared by
American Institutes for Research

California
Comprehensive Early
Learning Plan

Overview of
Meta-analysis Report

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Purpose of Report

- To fulfill one of the requirements for the state's receipt of federal funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)
- To serve as a starting point – but far from the only source of information – for the development of the state's Comprehensive Early Learning Plan, another ARRA requirement

Meta-Analysis Report: *Condition of Children Birth to Age Five and Status of Early Childhood Services in California*
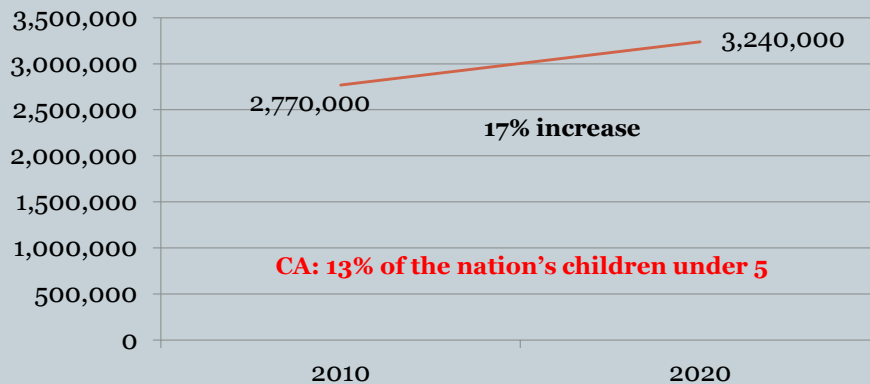
- **Part I: Condition of Children in California**
  - Population growth
  - Poverty
  - Family risk factors
  - Dual language learners
  - Community risk factors
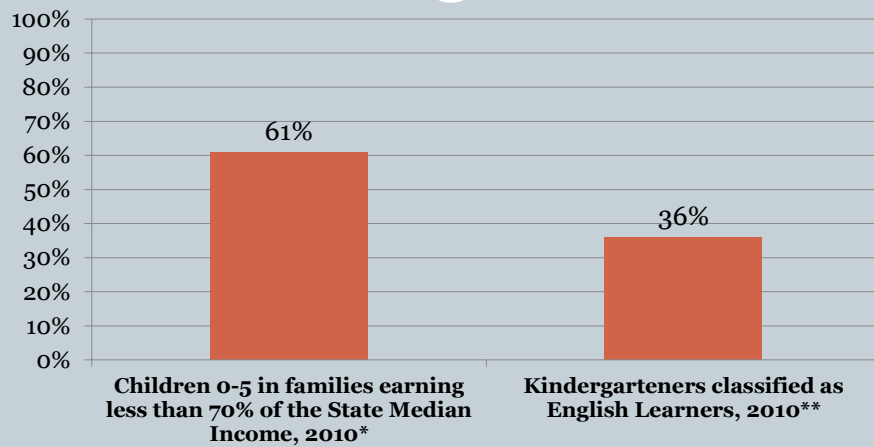 - Health risk factors

- Appendix: statistics by county

Population Projections

Children 0-5 in California

2,770,000

3,240,000

17% increase

CA: 13% of the nation's children under 5
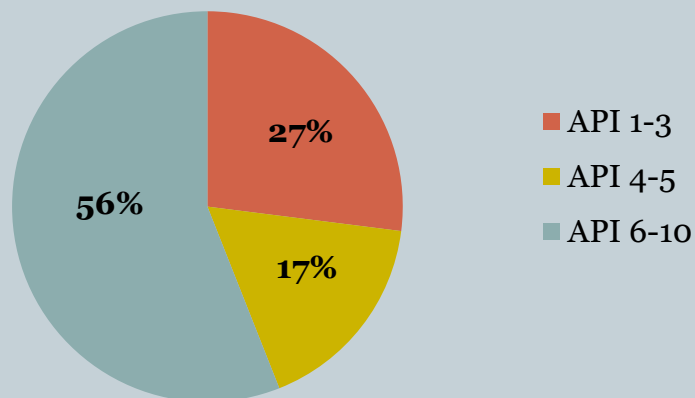
2010   2020

Source: California Department of Finance

Condition of Children in California

*Source: American Community Survey **Source: California Department of Education

- Children 0-5 in families earning less than 70% of the State Median Income, 2010*: 61%
- Kindergarteners classified as English Learners, 2010**: 36%

Children under 5 in neighborhoods by school performance

- API 1-3: 27%
- API 4-5: 17%
- API 6-10: 56%

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Part II: Summary of Reports on Early Care and Education in California

- Access to early learning and care
- Program quality assessment
- Family engagement
- Early childhood workforce development
- Dual language learners
- Developmental screening
- Assistance to children with special needs

- Early childhood mental health
- Child assessments
- Effective data practices
- Facilities
- Food and nutrition
- Kindergarten transition
- Finance and governance issues

Meta-Analysis Report: *Condition of Children Birth to Age Five and Status of Early Childhood Services in California*

•All recommendations in the meta-analysis are summarized from AIR's review of 81 recent reports (since 2000) on early care and education in California.

•Sources and many more details are in the full report:
http://www.earlylearningsystems.org/files/2069_CCELP_Meta_Analysis_Report.pdf
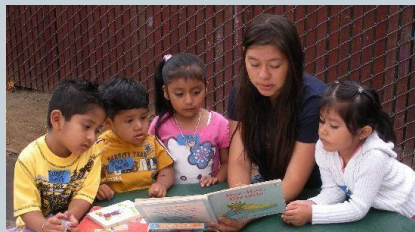
Some Key Recommendations: Access

- In a time of severe budget reductions, continue to focus on income-eligible children.
  - As additional resources permit, use a place-based approach.
- Set aside a minimum percentage for infant-toddler programs in state and federal funds.

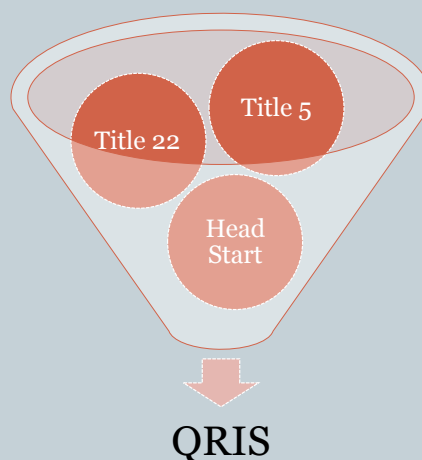## Some Key Recommendations: Access

- Dual language learners can especially benefit from a center-based program during the year before kindergarten.
  - However, at least a third of language-isolated dual language learners do not attend such a program.

Some Key Recommendations: Access

- Determine eligibility...
  - for **part-day developmental programs** at the time of application, and maintain eligibility even if family circumstances such as employment change.
    - Because the purposes of these programs is school readiness
  - for **subsidized full-day programs** conditionally, and finalize eligibility when the program begins.
    - Because these slots are limited and intended to support working parents who need child care

QRIS can tie systems together....

QRIS

Some Key Recommendations: Program Quality Assessment

- To bring systems together, the CAEL-QIS Advisory Committee recommended creating a statewide, tiered-reimbursement Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to evaluate and accordingly reimburse programs based on five quality elements:
  - Ratios and group size
  - Teaching and learning practices (ERS, CLASS, PARS observations)
    - Self-assessment, then independent observers
  - Family involvement
  - Staff education and training
  - Program leadership

* Source: California Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee

Some Key Recommendations: Program Quality Assessment

CAEL-QIS also recommended:

- Piloting a QRIS system before establishing it statewide.
- Looking to the Power of Preschool (PoP) program as a model for tiered reimbursement structure.
  - Structure tiers so that:
    - Tiers I and II are roughly equivalent to Title 22 standards
    - Tiers III and IV are roughly equivalent to Title 5 standards
    - Tier V is roughly equivalent to NAEYC standards

Some Key Recommendations:
Program Quality Assessment

Subsequently, noting the state's diversity, California's Race-to-the-Top, Early Learning Challenge Grant application:

- Adopted a locally based approach to the development of a QRIS with regional consortia in 15 counties that had made a commitment to strengthen their local QRIS and mentor other communities.

- Proposed developing tier levels & benchmarks locally, while setting some common targets.

Some Key Findings:
ECE Workforce Development

- Teachers with higher levels of education and training- and appropriate compensation-generally provide higher quality classroom environments that have been shown to support child outcomes *(e.g., Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001; Barnett, 2004; Loeb, Fuller, Kagan, & Caroll, 2004; Bueno, Darling-Hammond, & Gonzalez, 2010).*

Some Key Recommendations: ECE Workforce Development

- Additional training is needed for teachers in particular areas:
  - Children's language acquisition and best practices with dual language learners
  - Working with children with special needs
  - Adult-child interactions that effectively support children's cognitive and language development
- Establish an ECE workforce registry to identify professionals in the field, their educational and professional development background, and employment history.

Some Key Recommendations: ECE Workforce Development

- Develop a well-defined ECE career pathway and associated credentials that are aligned with the *Early Childhood Educator Competencies*.
- Continue the process of alignment and articulation of the ECE curriculum within and across community colleges and four-year colleges.

Some Key Recommendations:
ECE Workforce Development

- Strengthen supports for teachers pursuing additional education and training:
  - Support workforce investment programs
  - Offer distance learning and web-based training
  - Make classes available in the community and after hours

Some Key Recommendations:
Family Engagement

- Require programs to submit plans for how they will partner with families and meet their cultural and linguistic needs.
- Include provisions of written information and orientation for families in Title 22 licensing requirements for both home- and center-based providers.

Some Key Recommendations: Family Engagement

- While the CAEL QIS advisory committee recommended the use of the Environmental Rating Scale measure for family involvement, experts in family engagement responded by asking for a more specific, measurable menu of best practices.
  - The California *Early Childhood Educator Competencies* (CDE, 2011) includes three competency areas that might serve as a springboard: Culture, Diversity, and Equity; Family and Community Engagement; and Dual-Language Development.

Some Key Recommendations: Dual Language Learners

- In the community:
  - Expand outreach to Spanish-speaking families to increase attendance in ECE programs
- In the classroom:
  - Give DLL students the opportunity to use oral language frequently
  - Forge connections between new and familiar material
  - Provide visual clues to help with understanding

Some Key Recommendations:
Developmental Screening/Special Needs/Mental Health

- Ensure that screening for developmental and health problems is conducted for all children, in all classrooms, early in the program year.
- Increase outreach to families of children with special needs.
- Increase early childhood mental health consultation services in family child care programs.
- Establish a common approach for social-emotional development statewide by using the CSEFEL model.

Some Key Recommendations:
Child Assessments/Effective Data Systems

- Identify and address children's needs earlier in their lives through ongoing, developmentally appropriate assessments.
- Provide professional development to teachers to support their effective use of assessments.
- Create and implement a P-16 data system including unique child identifiers.
  - Such a system might be piloted in PoP counties first

Some Key Recommendations: Facilities

- Create child care–friendly land use policies and procedures that encourage child care facility development.
- Include preschool facilities in the next statewide education facilities bond, and distribute bond funds to LEAs as a grant.

Some Key Recommendations: Food and Nutrition

- Establish nutrition and physical activity requirements for child care programs.
- Strengthen the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and streamline paperwork requirements.

Some Key Recommendations: Kindergarten Transition and TK

- Establish systems to encourage preschool and kindergarten teachers to visit each other's classrooms, attend common workshops, and collaborate.
- Continue to increase guidance and support to districts to implement a quality Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program.

Some Key Recommendations: Funding

- Restore, and as possible, increase funding for early childhood services in California.
- Remove barriers to blending and braiding funding sources in order to cover the full cost of a quality program.
- Increase reimbursement rates for Title 5 programs --such as State Preschool and General Child Care for infants and toddlers-- to be at least equivalent to those for voucher programs, which are held to lower quality standards than Title 5.

Meta-Analysis authors: questions?

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